WELCOME

New Online Masters Students for Summer 2014:
Marisa Abrahamson, WI; Shaun Allingham, UK; Kerri Bostrom, MN; Robert Cadena, CA; Elizabeth Chetney, MD; James Davis, KY; Lisa Duncan, TX; Sarah Hackney, PA; Elizabeth Hartney, CO; Theran Hernandez, OK; Shamiah Hill, MS; May Jaber, IL; Katy Johnson, ME; Stephen Jones, UT; Marcus Jorgensen, CA; Melissa Karau, MN; Sadiksha Khadka, TX; Radheeka Kopyless, VA; Preston Lewis, MD; Brett Markey, PA; Hayley McNerney, CA; Lorilyn Montford, MD; Leigh Phillips, KS; Rachel Piksteen, MI; Jolina Rice, CO; Amanda Skingel, OH; George Statzell, MT; Zachary Stewart, MA; Noah Strom, MN; Maria Vasquez, FL; Brent Wheaton, NE; Evelyn Ziennker-Lee, NC

CONGRATULATIONS

Awards:
Dustin Casady, Fall 2013 on-campus graduate, received the Joe Gabig Memorial Award for demonstration of exceptional leadership in the science of migratory bird conservation and management from the Nebraska Chapter of the Wildlife Society and the Central Flyway Council.

Erik Prenosil, Spring 2014 on-campus graduate, received the Best Professional Poster Award for the 2014 Nebraska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society.

Zach Woiak, current on-campus student, received the Best Professional Paper Award for the 2014 Nebraska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society.

Spring 2014 Graduates:
Seven students were able to attend the UNK Spring Commencement ceremony on May 9th held in the Health and Sports Center. Over 35 graduates, guests, and faculty attended the Department breakfast before the ceremony to honor our graduates.

(From left to right, back row) Dr. Wyatt Hoback, Erik Prenosil, Jeremy Grauf, Sharon Cisneros, Dr. Julie Shaffer, (from left to right, front row) Adrienne Conley, Eva Aranda, Jennifer Sheehan, Jennifer Wawrzonek, Dr. Kimberly Carlson

Newsfeed

The Department of Biology has won the University-wide Departmental Teaching Award for 2014! This award is “presented each year in honor and recognition of a department/unit within the University of Nebraska that has made a unique and significant contribution to the teaching efforts of the University and which has outstanding esprit de corps in its dedication to the education of students at the undergraduate, graduate, or professional levels.”

Below is an excerpt from the article on the UNK website; for the full article click on the link: http://unknews.unk.edu/2014/03/25/unk-department-of-biology-wins-university-wide-teaching-award/.
The Department of Biology at UNK is receiving the University-wide Departmental Teaching Award for unique and significant contributions to the University of Nebraska’s teaching efforts (Photo by Steph Gallaway/UNK Creative Services)

By MELISSA LEE
UNL Director of Communications

LINCOLN – The Department of Biology at the University of Nebraska at Kearney has been selected to receive the University-wide Departmental Teaching Award (UDTA) from the University of Nebraska, NU President James B. Milliken announced today.

“From the time I first joined the University of Nebraska, I have been aware of the excellent reputation of the UNK Department of Biology,” Milliken said. “It is widely recognized as a leading department on campus that does a terrific job of providing high-quality undergraduate education to students who often go on to graduate or medical school and successful careers.

“When it comes to distance education, the department has excelled, creating a master’s program in biology that has expanded access and met a critical need for students,” Milliken added. “The biology faculty are highly regarded by their colleagues, innovative and popular with students. Most important, they are great at what they do. I congratulate the UNK Department of Biology on this well-deserved achievement.”

The UDTA originated in 1993 and is designed to recognize a department or unit within the University of Nebraska that has made unique and significant contributions to the university’s teaching efforts. The honored department is awarded $25,000 to be used in a manner the department sees fit, such as for travel to a conference, instructional equipment or improvements to a classroom or student resource.

UNK’s Department of Biology is home to more than 20 faculty, six graduate teaching assistants and nearly 700 undergraduate and graduate majors. Excellence in teaching is paramount for the department’s faculty members.
Publications, Meetings, Grants

Meetings


Continue to send us updates on any meetings, publications, grants, or awards that you have been involved with. Please email details to msbiology@unk.edu.

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**Director’s Desk from Dr. Janet Steele**

Facebook® is a wonderful social media tool and we are aware there is a student-run Facebook® site for students in our program. Faculty and staff associated with the program are not on this site so that you can feel free to express opinions, and there are certainly other popular social media sites. I want to caution you, however, about the kinds of information that cannot be shared on this site. Any exchange of information related to completing assignments, quizzes, or exams is absolutely forbidden. This constitutes academic dishonesty, which could result in all users of the site being dismissed from the program. Academic dishonesty includes not only actively exchanging information (telling someone what is on the exam, providing resources to answer questions or complete assignments, posting copies of exams) but also looking the other way when this type of exchange is going on. Because of the popularity of these kinds of sites, many faculty members in our program have stopped giving any kinds of “take-home” assignments and administer all of their quizzes and exams on Blackboard where the activity must be completed in one sitting within a given time limit. If you observe an exchange of information that constitutes academic dishonesty, we hope you will do the right thing and contact us. One challenge of online education from the faculty point of view is ensuring all students are doing their own work.
Just a reminder not to use the Degree Audit function on MyBlue. It works great for undergraduates who have to satisfy many different requirements, but it doesn’t work so well for graduate students. If a course did not have an official number when you were first admitted to UNK, MyBlue doesn’t know what to do with it and classifies it as “additional course work.” Any BIOL course numbered 800 or greater will count toward your degree. Approval of courses like CHEM 855 Biochemistry for High School Teachers is a hand-check.

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**Student News**

Laura Brennan (current distance student) gave birth to her 4th child, Zachary Allan, born August 22nd. He was 6 lb, 5 oz and 18½ inches long. He joins older siblings James, William, and Elise. (pictured right)

Dustin Casady (Fall 2013 on-campus graduate) and his wife Mery Casady (Fall 2012 on-campus graduate) welcomed a baby boy, Patrick Miguel on November 11th at 11:58 am. Patrick weighed in at 6 lbs 11oz and was 19 ½ in long. (pictured left)

Tim Cifelli (Spring 2012 distance graduate) has been admitted to the Baylor College of Medicine’s PhD program in Molecular Physiology and Biophysics.

Janelle Green (Summer 2011 distance graduate) accepted a biology instructor position within the Kentucky Community and Technical College System beginning this Fall 2014.

Tara Kubin (current distance student) gave birth to Mitchell Edgar on January 7th. Mitchell weighed 7 lbs 14 oz and was 20½ inches long. (pictured right)
Jennifer Mestres (Fall 2011 distance graduate) has been applying her degree as a high school science teacher since 2011. She and her husband recently adopted twins Zoe and Zander born on August 20, 2013. (pictured left)

Curtis Reese (current distance student) has accepted a position as an adjunct instructor at Northeast Community College in Norfolk, NE. He is going to teach a dual-credit biology class at Battle Creek High School in the fall.

Please let us know what is going on in your lives; email us your news at msbiology@unk.edu.

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**Office Space**

**Still looking to register for a class this summer?** The following courses are being offered during the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} summer sessions:

**May 27-July 18 session:**
- BIOL 830P-04 – Evolutionary Perspectives in Medicine (3 hrs)
- BIOL 858 – Physiology of Stress (3 hrs)

**June 9-August 1 session:**
- BIOL 820 – Introduction to Graduate Study (3 hrs-\textit{required course})
- BIOL 830P-03 – Immunology (3 hrs)
- BIOL 830P-05 – Avian Life History (3 hrs)
- BIOL 830P-06 – Zoonotic & Neglected Tropical Diseases (3 hrs)

Students can register for open classes through MyBlue up until the first day of the class.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Beginning May 12\textsuperscript{th}, students dropping a summer course receive a “W” on their transcript. The “W” does not calculate into GPA; it just indicates the course was dropped. Even if the class doesn’t begin until the 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} summer session, the student receives a “W” since the summer term has begun.

**Reminder:** If you haven’t registered yet for Fall 2014 classes, we encourage you to do so ASAP. Classes fill-up quickly so if there is a course you really want/need to take, you should register now. Fall 2014 classes begin August 25\textsuperscript{th}.

Remember, if a class you are interested in taking is full, contact Brian or Robyn at msbiology@unk.edu to be put on a waitlist. Should a spot become available you would then be contacted via your lopers email account to register.
Planning to graduate this Summer 2014? You will need to log-on to MyBlue and apply for August 2014 graduation. All students are required to apply for graduation even if they do not plan to attend ceremony. The deadline to apply for graduation this summer is June 16th. There is a $25 application fee that can be paid on-line when you submit your application. Commencement ceremony will be held on August 1st at 10:00 am in the Nebraska Student Union. We hope you can make the trip to Kearney for the commencement ceremony! Since the summer semester is more condensed, graduates need to complete the Comprehensive exam and have it returned to the Biology Department by July 7th. Please make arrangements with a proctor to complete your exam early in order to meet this deadline. The Proctor form must be submitted to the Program Coordinators, msbiology@unk.edu, at least 2 weeks prior to graduation.

Current students that are close to graduation (completed required courses including BIOL 831A-C) can take the Comprehensive Exam this summer (up until August 1st) if they’d prefer to complete the current comprehensive exam. The current comprehensive exam includes 80 multiple choice/true and false questions from the required courses (BIOL 802-Organic Evolution; BIOL 820–Intro to Graduate Study; BIOL 863-Biological Perspectives or BIOL 827-Biological Statistics, whichever course you completed as part of your required coursework) and 4 short essays relating to research methods and design. The student must identify a proctor for the exam and submit a Proctor Form (see Forms on the MS Biology website http://msbio.unk.edu) at least 2 weeks prior to taking the exam.

Reminder, beginning this Fall 2014, there will be a new Comprehensive Exam. The exam will include all courses in a student’s program of study. There will be 50 multiple choice/true and false questions covering the required courses, 4 short answer questions relating to research methods and design, and 3 long essays from the student’s electives (students will be given essay questions from their electives and must choose 3 to answer). It is important for current students to keep all course materials throughout the program since the exam will include questions from all courses taken.